

WASHINGTON – Senators Edward M. Kennedy and John F. Kerry and Congressmen John W. Olver and Robert J. Neal have applauded the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for awarding \$823,100 in funding to the United Veterans Association (UVA) for the acquisition of a new facility in Berkshire County. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded \$823,100 in funding to the UVA for the acquisition of a new facility in Berkshire County. The UVA currently operates a 120-bed transitional shelter for homeless veterans on the campus of the Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield. Kennedy, Kerry, Olver and Neal wrote to VA Secretary Anthony Principi earlier this year urging him to award the funding. Kennedy said, "I am glad the VA has recognized the good work done by the UVA by awarding this funding." Kerry said, "Veterans who have protected our country in times of war and times of peace now need a place to call home." Olver said, "I am pleased that the First District will have a place where veterans in Berkshire County can get the care and shelter they need." Neal said, "We have a collective responsibility to provide care and shelter to all of our veterans. The new facility will be part of an expansion that will help alleviate a waiting list of veterans in area 1. The funding will allow the UVA to purchase the former Optimun Care Center and, with minimal upgrades, provide a place where veterans can get the care and shelter they need. The UVA addresses the immediate needs of veterans by providing transitional housing services in area 1. Berkshire County has no full service per diem beds within a 1,000 square mile region. The new facility will be part of an expansion that will help alleviate a waiting list of veterans in area 1.

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